

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated September 23, 2005, claims 1-4, 12, 15 and 16 were rejected, and claims 5-11, 13, 14 and 17-22 were subjected to a restriction/election requirement and were withdrawn from further consideration by the Examiner. In response, applicant has cancelled claims 1-4, 12, 15 and 16 and added new claims 23-28. In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration of this application is requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner first noted that claims 13 and 14 referred to subject matter that was not shown in the elected species, namely, the subject matter of Figures 1-3. Accordingly, the Examiner withdrew claims 13 and 14 from further consideration. Applicant agrees and has revised the status identifier for claims 13 and 14 to be "withdrawn" via the present amendment.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 4, 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Essel U.S. 4,073,077. In response, applicant has the following comments.

New independent claims 23 and 26 now define the interconnection of the shovel blades in more detail. More specifically, claims 23 and 26 now state that the male connection part is disposed between the upper and lower edges of the shovel blade and along a side edge portion of the shovel blade. In addition, the male connection part extends longitudinally in a direction substantially parallel to the side edge portion of the shovel blade. Likewise, the female connection part is disposed between the upper and lower edge portions of the blade, and further is located along the side edge portion of the shovel blade. The female connection part also extends longitudinally in a direction substantially parallel to the side edge portion of the shovel blade. Thus, the complementary male and female connection parts are required to extend longitudinally along the side edge portions of the shovel blades. This feature cannot be found in the prior art cited by the Examiner.

More specifically, Essel '077 teaches complementary male and female connection parts, but the studs 31 and sockets 32 (see Figs. 1 and 3 of Essel '077) both extend longitudinally in a direction transverse to the side edges of the blade, and not substantially parallel to the side edges of the blade. As shown in applicant's Fig. 2, applicant requires a different motion for interconnecting the shovel blades, i.e. sliding the two blades in a direction parallel to the side edges to interconnect the blades. In contrast, Essel '077 requires the blade to be moved transversely to the side edges in order to assemble the blades. Thus, applicant believes claims 23-28 are now clearly distinguishable over Essel '077, and request the Examiner withdraw the rejection based on Essel.

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, and 12 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jacanin Jr. et al U.S. 4,878,704 in view of Petersen U.S. 2,538,654. The Examiner states that Jacanin Jr. et al teaches a convertible snow shovel wherein the blades are detachably connected using a cross brace while Petersen discloses a tool wherein a work element such as a brush or pad may be interconnected with a holder via a snap fit arrangement. The Examiner concluded that it would be obvious to modify Jacanin Jr. et al to include the snap fit attachment of Petersen to arrive at applicant's claimed invention. Applicant, however, respectfully disagrees for the following reasons.

First, the Examiner will note that applicant's interconnection is not a snap fit arrangement. The elongated post must be slid into a slotted tube as shown best in Fig. 2. In addition, even if one were to combine the teachings of Petersen with Jacanin Jr. et al, one would not arrive at applicant's invention. More specifically, the combination of Petersen with Jacanin Jr. et al would result in the handle of the shovel being snap fit onto the blade, and not the snap fitting of two blades together. One would have to substantially modify what is shown in Petersen to arrive at applicant's invention since there is nothing taught in Jacanin Jr. et al or in Petersen regarding the use of male and female connection parts along the side edges of the blades. In particular, there is nothing that would suggest to one skilled in the art that one could utilize male and female connection parts along the side edges of two blades to interconnect the blades since

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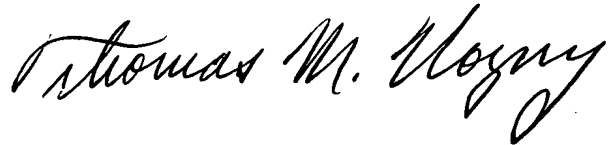
Jacanin Jr. et al teaches the use of a cross bracing member together with an auxiliary small blade, bolts and nuts to interconnect the larger blades. Petersen teaches a snap fit arrangement, but only between the handle and the work element. There is nothing in Petersen to suggest that one could interconnect the side edges of blades using the snap fit arrangement disclosed therein. This is especially important since applicant has not described a snap fit arrangement.

In view of the above, applicant requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of the claims.

An effort has been made to place this application in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

ANDRUS, SCEALES, STARKE & SAWALL, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thomas M. Wozny". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'T' and 'W'.

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